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Would Iran be facing threats of air attack from Israel and US—would there be open talk by US and Israeli leaders of air attack, even nuclear attack, as preventive war, as “options” for them, openly proclaiming planning, preparations—if Iran were **already** a nuclear state, like North Korea?

(The same would have applied to Saddam Hussein’s Iraq. Why is Pakistan not hearing such threats, for its black-market nuclear proliferation ?)

The US, by its open declarations of its nuclear policy and the variety of circumstances justifying US first-use—joined yesterday by President Chirac (France might use nuclear weapons as a response to a non-nuclear terrorist attack, with state sponsorship)—along with its attack on Iraq (and absence of threats against North Korea, or Pakistan), is creating strong incentives for non-nuclear states—Iran in particular-- to acquire nuclear weapons, rapidly, by any means.

At the same time, these same policies and the moves toward further development and testing of nuclear weapons by the US—evident even under Clinton, at the NPR Review Conference in 1995, with refusal to renounce first-use--totally contradict, for the foreseeable future, any intention by the US (or other nuclear states) to fulfill its obligations under the NPR to further reduce and ultimately abolish nuclear weapons: thus **legitimizing** programs in non-nuclear states to abandon the NPR and, prior to that, to make progress toward acquiring nuclear materials as permitted under the NPR. This undoubtedly influenced the decisions of India and Pakistan to test weapons, and North Korea to acquire them.

For both reasons, it is foolish to regard the NPR now (or in the recent past) as establishing an international **norm** against the acquisition and use of nuclear weapons. Incentives against acquiring them (aside from cost) have been reduced to concern over regional arms races, and fear of US or Israeli illegal aggression against countries independent of or hostile to the US or its allies that move toward acquiring them. And the latter threats are subject to non-nuclear deterrence (which may or may not actually deter attack).